

GOUCHER COLLEGE | POLL

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Goucher College Poll Results: Fewer than half of Marylanders think state is going in the right direction but maintain positive economic outlook; most residents support increased funding to improve public education, unaware of Kirwan Commission; Gov. Hogan remains popular

BALTIMORE (September 23, 2019)—The Goucher College Poll asked Maryland residents their views on various statewide issues, including the direction of and most important issue facing the state and the current and future economic situation in Maryland. Residents were also asked about Gov. Larry Hogan, state spending, the Kirwan Commission, and their willingness to fund improvements in public education, roads and highways, and public transportation. The Goucher College Poll surveyed **763** Maryland adults from **September 13-18** and has a margin of error of **+/-3.6 percent**.

Perceptions of Maryland and Gov. Hogan

Opinion toward the direction of the state, although still more positive than negative, has fallen to its lowest point since Gov. Hogan took office in January 2015; **46 percent** say Maryland is heading in the right direction and **35 percent** say Maryland is off on the wrong track. At this time last year, **54 percent** said Maryland was heading in the right direction.

Seventeen percent of Marylanders identify an economic issue—jobs, taxes, or economic growth—and **13 percent** identify education as the most important issues facing Maryland today. Another **12 percent** say crime or criminal justice issues are the most important.

The majority of Marylanders—**60 percent**—hold a mostly positive view of the Maryland economy, while **29 percent** hold a mostly negative view. When asked to look ahead to the next

year, **21 percent** think the Maryland economy will get better, **22 percent** think it will get worse, and **53 percent** think it will stay about the same.

Gov. Hogan remains in good standing among a majority of Marylanders. **Sixty-four percent** of Marylanders approve of the job Larry Hogan is doing as governor, **14 percent** disapprove, and **21 percent** say they don't know. For historical context, his approval ratings have not registered below **60 percent** since October 2015.

Spending, funding, and the Kirwan Commission

Respondents were asked whether the state government spends too little, about the right amount, or too much on public education, public transportation, and roads and highways.

Public education:

Too little: **70 percent**

Right amount: **19 percent**

Too much: **6 percent**

Public transportation:

Too little: **43 percent**

Right amount: **36 percent**

Too much: **8 percent**

Roads and highways:

Too little: **54 percent**

Right amount: **34 percent**

Too much: **8 percent**

Residents were also asked whether they support or oppose *personally* paying more in state taxes to improve each of the following in Maryland.

- **74 percent** support personally paying more in taxes to improve public education, **26 percent oppose**.
- **51 percent** support personally paying more in taxes to improve public transportation, **46 percent oppose**.
- **52 percent** support personally paying more in taxes to improve roads and highways, **45 percent oppose**.

While majorities of Marylanders think that the state spends too little on public education and express a willingness to personally pay more in state taxes to improve public education, a large majority—**77 percent**—have heard or read nothing about the Kirwan Commission. **Twenty-two percent** have heard or read a little, some, or a lot about Kirwan; **68 percent** of those respondents correctly identified the goal of the commission was to “improve public education” and **15 percent** thought the goal was to “improve public transportation.”

The Kirwan Commission, or the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, is named for the chair of the commission, William “Brit” Kirwan, chancellor emeritus of the University System of Maryland. The goal of the Kirwan Commission is to research and develop major funding and policy reforms to improve the quality of Maryland’s public education system.

About the Goucher College Poll

The Goucher College Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center at Goucher College. The center is directed by Dr. Mileah Kromer, associate professor of political science.

The Goucher College Poll is fully funded by the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center endowment and does not take additional funding from outside sources. The mission of the Goucher College Poll is to improve public discourse in Maryland by providing neutral, unbiased, and independent information on citizen perceptions and opinions. The data collected by the poll are used to support faculty and student research.

The Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center is a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations and the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative.

For more information, or to view archived polls, please visit www.goucher.edu/poll.



Survey Methodology

To ensure all Maryland residents are represented, the poll is conducted using random digit dialing (RDD) of a county-level stratified random sample using landline and cellular telephone numbers. The sample of telephone numbers for the survey is purchased from Dynata (<https://www.dynata.com/>).

The survey was conducted **Friday, September 13, to Wednesday, September 18**. During this time, interviews were conducted 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday to Friday and noon to 9 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The Goucher College Poll uses Voxco Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software to administer its surveys. Interviews are conducted by a staff of professionally trained, paid, student interviewers.

Interviewers attempted to reach respondents with working phone numbers a maximum of five times. Only Maryland adults—residents aged 18 years or older—were eligible to participate. Interviews were not conducted with adults who were reached at business or work numbers.

Eighty percent of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone and **20 percent** were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with **763** Maryland adults. For a sample size of **763**, there is a **95 percent** probability the survey results have a plus or minus **3.6 percentage point** sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. Margins of error are higher for subsamples.

In addition to sampling error, all surveys are subject to sources of non-sampling error, including question wording effects, question order effects, and non-response bias. Margin of error is not adjusted for design effects. Data is weighted by gender, age, race, region, and educational attainment of the state to represent adult population targets established by the most recent American Community Survey (ACS).

Survey Question Design

The Goucher College Poll provides the questions as worded and the order in which they are administered to respondents.

BRACKETED ITEMS []: Items and statements in brackets are rotated to ensure respondents do not receive a set order of response options, which maintains question construction integrity by avoiding respondent agreement based on question composition.

Example: [agree or disagree] or [disagree or agree]

PROBE (p): Some questions contain a “probe” maneuver to determine a respondent’s intensity of opinion/perspective. Probe techniques used in this questionnaire mainly consist of asking respondents if their responses are more intense than initially provided.

Example: Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of President Obama?

PROBE: Would you say very favorable/unfavorable?

OPEN-ENDED: No response options are provided for an open-ended question, i.e., it is entirely up to the respondent to provide the response information. Any response options provided to the interviewer are not read to the respondent; they are only used to help reduce interviewer error and time in coding the response.

VOLUNTEER (v): Volunteer responses means the interviewer did not offer that response option in the question as read to the interviewer. Interviewers are instructed not to offer “don’t know” or “refused” or “some other opinion” to the respondent, but the respondent is free to volunteer that information for the interviewer to record.

Goucher College Poll Sample Demographics (in percent)

	Maryland Adult Population Parameter	Weighted Sample Estimate <i>Adults</i> (n=763)	Weighted Sample Estimate <i>Registered Voters</i> (n=655)
Gender			
Male	47	47	46
Female	53	53	54
Age			
18 to 24	12	12	9
25 to 34	18	18	17
35 to 44	16	16	16
45 to 54	18	18	19
55 to 64	17	17	19
65+	19	19	20
Race			
White	61	61	63
Black	30	30	30
All other	9	9	7
Education			
High school or less	35	35	31
Tech/AA/some college	26	26	28
Four-year college degree	21	21	22
Adv./professional degree	18	18	19
Region			
Montgomery County	17	17	17
Prince George's County	15	15	15
Baltimore City	11	11	11
Baltimore County	14	14	14
Central Region	21	21	22
Southern Region	6	6	6
Eastern Shore Region	8	8	8
Western Region	8	8	7

Counties included in region:

- Central: Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, and Howard
- Western: Allegany, Garrett, Frederick, and Washington
- Eastern Shore: Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester
- Southern: Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's

Registered Voters

Registered voter screen question:

Q: REGVOTE

Are you registered to vote at your current address?

If "**Yes**," follow up: Are you registered as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, unaffiliated, or something else?

Of the **763** Maryland adult residents surveyed, **655** indicated they were registered voters with the Democratic, Republican, or other party or registered unaffiliated (i.e., independent).

Maryland Voter Registration (in percent)

	Party Registration (Aug 2019)	Weighted Sample Estimate Registered Voters (n=655)
Democratic Party	54	53
Republican Party	25	26
Unaffiliated (Independent)	19	19
Other Party (Green/Libertarian/Other)	1	2
Total=	Voters in MD 4,018,568	655 +/-3.8

Information on voter registration in Maryland from the Board of Elections can be found at <http://www.elections.state.md.us>.

Q: IDEO

Do you consider yourself to be politically [**conservative, moderate, or progressive**]?

	All Adults	Registered Voters
Conservative	23	23
Moderate	48	49
Progressive	24	25
Don't know (v)	5	4
Total=	763 +/-3.6	655 +/-3.8

The following question was asked to the full sample of **763 Maryland adults**. Please refer to **page 13** for the results by registered voter and other key demographics. Results are in percent and may not add up exactly to 100 due to weighting and rounding.

Q: IMPISSUE

What do you think is the most important issue facing the state of Maryland today?

[OPEN-ENDED]

	SEPT 19
Education	13
Crime/criminal justice/police	12
Taxes	7
Economy/economic growth/development	7
Job growth/unemployment	3
Drugs/heroin	4
Environmental issues/concerns	7
Guns/gun control	5
Politics and political leaders/leadership	4
Transportation/infrastructure/roads/mass transit	7
Health care	4
Immigration	3
Housing/cost of living	4
Other:	8
Don't Know (v)	12
Total=	763 +/-3.6

Q: TRACK

In general, do you think things in the state [are headed in the right direction or are off on the wrong track]?

	FEB 15	OCT 15	SEPT 16	SEPT 17	SEPT 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19
Wrong track	34	33	19	31	30	25	35
Right direction	54	56	65	55	54	59	46
Don't know/Refused (v)	12	11	17	14	16	16	19
Total=	619 +/-3.9	636 +/-3.9	668 +/-3.8	671 +/-3.8	831 +/-3.4	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6

Q: HOGANJOB

Do you [approve or disapprove] of the way Larry Hogan is handling his job as governor?

PROBE

	OCT 15	SEPT 16	SEPT 17	SEPT 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19
Strongly disapprove (p)	3	3	6	8	4	5
Disapprove	15	9	10	9	10	9
Approve	42	45	42	36	39	39
Strongly approve (p)	16	25	20	28	30	25
Don't know (v)	23	17	20	17	14	21
Refused (v)	1	1	1	3	3	2
Total=	636 +/-3.9	668 +/-3.8	671 +/-3.8	831 +/-3.4	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6

Q: SPENDING

Next, I'd like to know whether you think the Maryland state government spends [**too much, too little, or about the right amount**] on each one of the following areas. . .

[items rotated]

Q: SP_EDUC

Q: SP_TRANS

Q: SP_ROADS

	Too Little	Right Amount	Too Much	DK/REF (v)
Public education	70	19	6	5
Public transportation	43	36	8	13
Roads and highways	54	34	8	4

Total=763, +/-3.6

Q: KIRWAN1

How much have you heard or read about the Kirwan Commission: [**nothing at all, only a little, some, a lot**]?

	SEPT 19
Nothing at all	77
Only a little	14
Some	5
A lot	3
Don't know (v)	1
Total=	763 +/-3.6

Only the 162 respondents who indicated they had heard a “little,” “some,” or “a lot” about the Kirwan Commission were asked KIRWAN2.

Q: KIRWAN2¹

From everything you’ve heard or read, what is the goal of the Kirwan commission? Is it [to **improve public education OR to improve public transportation**] in Maryland?

	SEPT 19
Public education	68
Public transportation	15
Some other response (v)	2
Don’t know (v)	15
Refused (v)	>1
Total=	162 +/-7.7

Q: MDECON

Do you have a [**mostly negative or mostly positive**] view of the current economic situation in Maryland?

	SEPT 17	FEB 18	FEB 19	SEPT 19
Mostly negative	33	31	28	29
Mostly positive	57	60	61	60
Don’t know (v)	10	9	11	10
Refused (v)	0	>1	0	1
Total=	671 +/-3.8	800 +/-3.5	808 +/-3.4	763 +/-3.6

¹The correct answer is public education.

Q: MDECON_FUT

Thinking ahead, do you expect the Maryland economy to get [**better, worse, or stay about the same**] over the next year?

	SEPT 19
Worse	22
Stay about the same	53
Get better	21
Don't know (v)	3
Refused (v)	>1
Total=	763 +/-3.6

Q: FUNDING

Okay, now please tell me whether you would [**support or oppose**] *personally* paying more in state taxes to improve each of the following in Maryland:

PROBE

[items rotated]

Q: PUBEDUC

Q: PUBTRANS

Q: ROADS

	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	Support	Strongly Support	DK/REF (v)
Public education	12	14	34	40	>1
Public transportation	16	30	34	17	3
Roads and highways	16	29	33	19	3

Total = 763, +/-3.6

Results by Demographics (in percent)

- Column percentages
- Unless specified, “don’t know,” “refused,” and other volunteered responses are not included below
- Margin of error is higher for subsamples
- Refer to tables above for questions as worded

	Registered Voters				Maryland Adults							
		Party Registration			Gender		Age			Race		
	All (n=655)	Dem (n=347)	Ind (n=125)	Rep (n=172)	Male (n=359)	Female (n=404)	18-34 (n=232)	35-54 (n=262)	55+ (n=269)	White (n=465)	Black (n=228)	Other (n=70)
Q: TRACK												
Wrong track	34	28	31	45	35	35	34	35	37	39	30	26
Right direction	46	49	50	39	48	44	43	48	46	42	49	59
Q: HOGANJOB												
Disapprove	14	18	10	6	14	14	13	17	13	13	16	13
Approve	66	59	66	81	64	63	46	67	75	66	58	65
Q: SP_EDUC												
Too little	69	74	65	61	63	76	76	76	59	64	84	62
Right amount	20	18	20	22	23	16	19	13	25	21	13	31
Too much	6	3	11	11	8	4	2	6	10	9	1	4
Q: SP_TRANS												
Too little	43	52	42	26	41	45	49	42	40	40	49	44
Right amount	36	32	39	44	39	34	37	35	37	34	38	44
Too much	7	4	6	15	9	6	7	7	9	8	7	6
Q: SP_ROADS												
Too little	54	54	46	56	53	54	54	47	60	52	56	58
Right amount	34	33	37	34	37	31	28	39	34	35	33	31
Too much	8	8	14	5	7	10	11	10	5	7	10	9

	Maryland Adults							
	College		Region			Ideology		
	>4-year degree (n=466)	4-year degree + (n=297)	MG/ PG (n=245)	Central/ Balt Metro (n=350)	Outside Urban Corridor (n=168)	Cons (n=175)	Mod (n=367)	Prog (n=185)
Q: TRACK								
Wrong track	37	32	25	42	37	47	31	32
Right direction	42	52	55	40	44	40	49	47
Q: HOGANJOB								
Disapprove	14	14	17	17	4	6	9	32
Approve	63	65	62	61	72	74	70	43
Q: SP_EDUC								
Too little	71	68	68	73	65	60	68	83
Right amount	19	20	26	14	21	19	22	14
Too much	5	7	3	8	5	14	5	1
Q: SP_TRANS								
Too little	42	46	52	43	33	27	41	65
Right amount	37	36	34	37	39	46	40	23
Too much	8	7	6	9	7	14	7	4
Q: SP_ROADS								
Too little	55	51	59	52	49	52	57	48
Right amount	32	37	30	35	38	40	30	37
Too much	9	7	9	9	7	4	10	10

	Registered Voters				Maryland Adults							
		Party Registration			Gender		Age			Race		
	All (n=655)	Dem (n=347)	Ind (n=125)	Rep (n=172)	Male (n=359)	Female (n=404)	18-34 (n=232)	35-54 (n=262)	55+ (n=269)	White (n=465)	Black (n=228)	Other (n=70)
Q: KIRWAN1												
Nothing	75	74	78	77	77	77	89	76	67	77	78	75
Little/some/a lot	22	23	21	22	22	21	11	21	30	22	20	23
Q: MDECON												
Mostly negative	26	29	25	21	21	35	40	24	24	23	38	33
Mostly positive	62	58	61	73	69	53	47	67	66	67	48	55
Q: MDECON_FUT												
Worse	20	26	16	10	16	27	26	19	21	16	31	32
Stay the same	55	53	55	57	55	52	44	58	57	58	46	44
Better	22	17	27	29	25	18	25	21	19	22	20	21
Q:PUBEDUC												
Oppose	27	18	21	49	32	20	16	21	37	30	18	18
Support	72	81	78	50	68	80	84	79	61	69	81	82
Q: PUBTRANS												
Oppose	45	37	35	69	45	47	39	51	47	48	45	38
Support	52	59	62	30	51	51	58	47	49	49	52	61
Q: ROADS												
Oppose	45	42	42	53	45	45	43	50	42	48	42	38
Support	52	54	55	44	53	52	54	49	53	49	55	61

	Maryland Adults							
	College		Region			Ideology		
	>4-year degree (n=466)	4-year degree + (n=297)	MG/ PG (n=245)	Central/ Balt Metro (n=350)	Outside Urban Corridor (n=168)	Cons (n=175)	Mod (n=367)	Prog (n=185)
Q: KIRWAN1								
Nothing	79	74	74	75	85	78	74	80
Little/some/a lot	19	24	24	23	15	22	23	18
Q: MDECON								
Mostly negative	34	20	32	28	25	30	26	35
Mostly positive	55	68	58	60	64	64	64	50
Q: MDECON_FUT								
Worse	23	19	29	21	12	16	23	26
Stay the same	50	59	53	51	59	51	57	51
Better	23	19	15	25	24	31	19	15
Q:PUBEDUC								
Oppose	25	26	23	25	29	41	22	16
Support	74	73	77	74	70	58	77	84
Q: PUBTRANS								
Oppose	50	39	37	50	51	64	47	26
Support	46	59	62	45	47	33	49	72
Q: ROADS								
Oppose	48	41	39	47	49	51	44	41
Support	49	57	60	49	48	45	54	57